3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

At the present time a day's march is twenty-five miles, during which a man carries sixty pounds, while the load for a woman is half that weight. The gait of the Ovimbundu includes a limp at every step, so suggesting that the carrier is lame or tired. This appears to be a method consciously adopted as a protection against fatigue, because all muscles are momentarily relaxed. Loads are carried on the head in a long forked stick to which they are lashed. When the carrier rests, the load is not placed on the ground, but is held upright on the stick (Plate XXX, Fig. 2). Such a method avoids the strain of lifting the load from the ground after each rest pause.

Although the Ovimbundu have an exchange of products among themselves by both barter and the use of Portuguese money, there are no large markets, with the exception of those at the coastal towns of Loanda, Lobito, and Benguela. There is absolutely nothing in Angola which can be compared with the great markets in Nigeria.

Despite the absence of a system of exchange on a large scale, the Ovimbundu have many terms describing units of measurement. There are native standards of length, area, and capacity, but no measures of weight which are undeniably of Umbundu origin.

The unit of length (*epaluma*) is the distance from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the middle finger when the hand is outstretched. The term for two of these units is *apaluma avali*. These words are the plural of *epaluma; avali* means two. These units are used to measure tobacco before it has been coiled.

Cloth is measured by stretching the arms to their full extent in line with the shoulders; the distance between the tips of the middle fingers is *epeka*. The stride for measuring land is *elianga*.

Onjimba is an area about twenty-five feet square. *Etemo* ("hoe") is an area of land two hundred yards long and thirty feet broad. A large field covers two or three *atemo*.

Measures of capacity are provided by various types of baskets. The large conical basket (*ohumba*) has an interwoven mark which indicates a measure for corn, meal, and beans. *Ocitenge* is a coarsely made basket used as a unit of capacity. *Uhamba* is a basket two feet long and one foot deep. The basket on a rectangular base is also *uhamba*, but at the present day cans are taking the place of all these old measures. Palm oil is measured in a gourd (*ocitau* or *ombangi*) of definite size. This little gourd is also used for measuring a viscous substance from trees. The word *ekokoto* is used to describe this mucilage.

436 804 Balls of wax and tobacco were, and are now, definite standard of trade. To some extent rubber as a medium of exchange has been used through contact with eastern Angola. The Umbundu word *ocilila* expresses a weight of about thirty kilos.

805 221 There is no measure for minutes or hours. I have seen a man of the Luchazi tribe keep account of the number of days taken on a journey by cutting notches on a stick. Ngonga says that the Ovimbundu reckon by cutting notches, also by knotting a piece of string. Three days would be expressed by the words *akumbi atatu* ("three suns"). The word day or sun is used in fixing a time. There is no word for week. A month is *osai*, which is the word for moon. When the corn is ripe the people say, "We are in a new year." Another yearly time mark is the arrival of the first rains, probably in the middle of September.

The words *oku lima* ("to cultivate") yield the word *ulima*, which designates the period between the beginnings of two rainy seasons. Corn is planted about the time of the first heavy rains, which occur in late September or early October. Naturally, this important occasion forms a somewhat uncertain time base; nevertheless it is the one used to express the lapse of years up to five in number. After such a period the estimation of time is unreliable.

INDUSTRIES

IRON-WORK

326 Among occupations of primary importance is that of the blacksmith (*ocivinda*). Owing to the increasing importation of hoe blades and other iron goods, together with the facilities for collecting scrap iron, the winning and smelting of iron is increasingly rare. There are probably very few places where the old type of conical clay furnace now exists. Almost any fragments of iron are melted at the forge where a box is kept to hold nails, hoop iron from packing cases, and other fragments resulting from proximity to a European culture.

Nothing is mixed with the iron, neither is there any casting in molds. The only process is the forging of red-hot iron. The Ovimbundu do not draw iron wire, although they know of the process which is practised by the Vachokue.

The work of the blacksmith was studied at the village of Njongolo in Elende. The men were for a time reticent respecting the nature of their training and the ceremony of initiation, but the chief of the village helped considerably by persuading the men to speak freely.